



30 west superior street / duluth, minnesota 55802-2093 / fax: 218-723-3955 / www.allete.com

David R. Moeller
Senior Attorney
218-723-3963
dmoeller@allete.com

March 15, 2013

VIA OVERNIGHT COURIER

Darrell Nitschke
Executive Secretary
North Dakota Public Service Commission
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 408
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0480

**RE: Minnesota Power Bison 4 Wind Project
Letter of Intent to Construct Energy Conversion Facility and Request to
Shorten the One-Year Time Requirement for Filing Application**

Dear Mr. Nitschke:

Minnesota Power¹ is pleased to announce its plans to construct an additional wind energy conversion facility ("Bison 4 Wind Project") in Mercer, Oliver, and Morton counties. The purpose of this letter is to: (1) notify the North Dakota Public Service Commission ("Commission") of Minnesota Power's intent to construct the wind energy conversion facility as required by N.D.C.C. § 49-22-07.1 and (2) request the Commission shorten the one-year waiting period between this notification and when an application for a Certificate of Site Compatibility can be submitted as established by N.D. Admin. Code 69-06-03-01 to one month. This request is made pursuant to N.D.C.C. § 49-22-07.2.

Minnesota Power previously received Commission approval in Case No. PU-11-620 to construct a transmission line extension to the existing 230 kV transmission line that was intended to be utilized by wind projects developed by ALLETE Clean Energy, an ALLETE subsidiary. In conjunction with the transmission line extension, Minnesota Power is proposing to request Commission approval for a project up to 210 MW to be located in Mercer, Oliver, and Morton counties. Attachment A is a map of the proposed Bison 4 Wind Project. N.D. Admin. Code 69-06-03-02(2). Minnesota Power anticipates initial site work construction to commence by fall 2013 contingent on obtaining all necessary approvals from the Commission and local governments.

¹Minnesota Power is an operating division of ALLETE, Inc. ALLETE's Certificate of Good Standing issued by the North Dakota Secretary of State was provided to the Commission in a letter dated May 16, 2011 in Case No. PU-11-57.

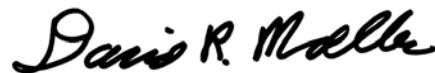


The Bison 4 Wind Project will interconnect with a new substation to be built by Minnesota Power that is an extension of the existing 230 kV transmission line from the existing 230 kV Bison Substation and then be delivered to the Square Butte Substation. The wind energy will then be transmitted via Minnesota Power's existing 250kV DC Line and the AC transmission system as available and is intended to be used to meet Minnesota Power's customer needs. N.D. Admin. Code 69-06-03-02(1). Minnesota Power estimates that this up to 210 MW project will cost approximately \$400 million depending on final project design and turbine selection. N.D.Admin. Code 69-06-03-02(4).

Minnesota Power expects to file the site permit application in April 2013 in order to obtain Commission approval by fall 2013. Therefore, Minnesota Power respectfully requests pursuant to N.D.C.C. § 49-22.07.2 that the Commission shorten the one-year waiting between filing this letter of intent and a siting application to one month. N.D. Admin. Code. 69-06-03-01. The original and ten copies of this waiver application are being filed with the Commission as required by N.D. Admin. Code 69-06-06-01.2.

If you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact me at (218) 723-3963.

Sincerely,



David R. Moeller

Enc.

cc: Margaret Hodnik, Minnesota Power
Todd Simmons, Minnesota Power
Bill Sawyer, Minnesota Power
Dan McCourtney, ALLETE